

God does not cause suffering, but by including it in His Plan He can properly be said to inflict it. God inflicts the suffering that human sin has caused and causes. God inflicts the suffering created by one or more of the five root causes of human suffering. This helps to explain the Scriptures which seem to make God the author of human suffering.

Some suffering He inflicts indirectly, through ordinary judgments and penalties which fall upon violators of the ordered system of physical, biological, moral, and spiritual laws that He established at Creation. Some suffering He inflicts directly, through extraordinary judgments and penalties which fall on violators of His specially revealed moral and spiritual laws which He has established from time to time.

Thus God has established laws and penalties; and the violation of these laws brings human suffering. But that suffering has been incurred only when human beings have violated those laws.

Of course, the greatest violation of God's laws occurred when mankind transgressed the commandment, "You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil!" That violation brought the curse under which mankind presently suffers, and the curse under which the creation presently groans.

As we reflect upon the nature of man and of the universe, we discover that the outward facade of mankind's seemingly well-ordered structure conceals deep-seated disorders of the human spirit which erupt from time to time in destructive actions; and that the outward facade of the physical universe's seemingly well-ordered structure conceals deep-seated disorders of the physical organism that erupt from time to time in destructive manifestations.

The Bible views human hatred, violence, abuse, immorality, dishonesty, and lawlessness as more than psychological or sociological phenomena to be studied; it views them as outward manifestations of inward depravity and corruption in need of remediation!

And the Bible views physical/biological disorders, disasters, and diseases as more than the manifestation of natural forces operating according to natural laws; it views them as manifestations of the curse that lies heavily upon the entire creation!

Mankind's original sin brought suffering upon all humanity and upon the creation. In addition, human beings continue to violate God's physical, biological, moral, and spiritual laws; and thus they continue to bring suffering upon themselves.

Examples of violations of physical, biological, moral, and spiritual laws abound. Let us note the following:

If we neglect to check the fluid level in our car's cooling system, and then run dry and boil over right in the middle of the Ben Franklin Bridge (in Philadelphia) on a very hot day, we suffer! (and others suffer with us)